

Robert Town 21st Mo 1846

To J. S. Hampton.

Surgeon Superintendent
of the Sir George Seymour.

Having had occasion to go on board the "Sir George Seymour" Convict ship on her arrival here in 1845, with the "Pentonville Men," I readily bear my testimony not merely to the order, cleanliness and admirable discipline which seemed to characterize the arrangements on board that vessel; but also to the favorable condition of the Convicts, whose general appearance and deportment bore striking evidence to my own mind, at least, of the salutary effects of the discipline & training to which they had been previously subjected.

I again visited the Pentonville Men at the Stirling Depot, subsequent to their debarkation, when my favorable impressions respecting them were materially confirmed. On one of these occasions the men were assembled for devotional purposes, when they were addressed by their religious instructor myself; and although I have been present at a great many seasons of a similar kind with Prisoners, I well remember my impression at the time was, that I had never witnessed a more hopeful set of men of that class. The strict propriety of their deportment, the solidity of their countenances, and the unaffected interest they appeared to evince on this occasion, taken in conjunction with the opportunities I had had of conversing

sation with them individually, convinced me that the better feelings of their hearts had been under considerable culture and exercise, and that were these unhappy men but placed under circumstances favorable to further improvement, their conduct would be marked by correspondent fruits, — fruits that would amply compensate for the labor that had been bestowed on them.

It was with pain & commiseration that I afterwards saw numbers of these men employed week after week & month after month in breaking stones upon the highway — an occupation associated in the public mind, more particularly in this country, with degradation & infamy. I could not but reflect on the expectations which had been held out to these men at home, (with the best intentions and in all sincerity I believe by the Authorities in the Mother Country;) more particularly with reference to their probable early employment with the Settlers, under circumstances favorable to their permanent amelioration — expectations thus miserably disappointed; — and taking into account the blighting influence of the "hope deferred which maketh the heart sick" and the constant influence & weight of the temptations to evil by which men under such circumstances are but too surely ~~surely~~ surrounded — I considered the relapse of the great majority into misconduct as almost inevitable. Otherwise human nature must be very differently constituted to what it is known to be. In what degree & ever this anticipation may have been realized, and the Penton-

ville men, under such circumstances, may have failed in coming up to the hopes of their friends, in general conduct, it would be most unfair, in my apprehensions, to regard such failure as at all essentially connected with, or resulting from, the system of discipline under which they have been placed either in the Pentonville Prison or on the passage out. Probably no previous system of discipline, even the most favorable, were that certainly known, will ever enable men to bear up and sustain much less improve, their moral character under such peculiarly unfavorable circumstances as are those to which the unfortunate men under consideration have but too generally been exposed in this colony.

I remain

Yours respectfully

George Washington Walker

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Letter to Dr. Hampton
respecting the Pentonville
Men who came out in
the Sir George Seymour
8/1 Mo. 1840